

And if we are going to move forward, if we are going to have the Internal Revenue Service have the respect that we need it to have, which it doesn't have right now, there is an overwhelming level of concern and consternation about how the IRS handled these things in the past and how they conducted themselves.

The fact that the Internal Revenue Service has not been forthcoming pursuant to Chairman CAMP's request for information is not in dispute. There is nobody here that is arguing the IRS has been completely forthcoming and given the chairman all the information he needs or that he has requested. No. They haven't been forthcoming, and that continues to be a real problem.

I think it is important for us to recognize that the TIGTA report was an audit. It was not an investigation. An investigation is ongoing. So this notion that there is no knowledge or there is no indication of any sort of political influence, I think that there is a great deal of knowledge of political influence that was peddled and used here, and I think the facts bear it out.

□ 1730

The scope of the audit that the gentleman was referring to was to focus on conservative targeting. The IG struck within the parameters of the audit. Far more conservative groups faced IRS scrutiny, they faced more questions, and were approved at a lower rate than progressive groups were.

Numbers are very straightforward: 104 conservative groups experienced an average of 15 additional questions, only 46 percent of conservative applicants were approved, and 56 percent of groups are either waiting for a determination or have withdrawn in frustration.

Now, that is messed up. If you are withdrawing because you can't get a straight answer, you are just feeling overwhelmed, who wins then?

The Internal Revenue Service wins, and the taxpayer that wants to participate in the public debate loses.

Compare that to seven progressive groups that were asked an average of just five additional questions.

You know what, Mr. Speaker?

Every one of those progressive groups was approved—100 percent of them were approved.

We know now that the IRS targeted not only right-leaning applicants, but also right-leaning groups that are already operating as 501(c)(4)s, and at Washington, D.C.'s direction, not Cincinnati's initiative, at Washington, D.C.'s direction, dozens of groups operating as 501(c)(4)s were flagged for IRS surveillance, monitoring of the groups' activities, Web sites, and any other publicly available information.

Of these groups, 83 percent were right-leaning, and of the groups that the IRS selected for audit, 100 percent of those were conservative-leaning. So, this idea that this was, well, everybody is treated the same way, the facts don't bear that out, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to draw attention to one particular group, a constituency that I represent, the West Suburban Patriots of DuPage County. They submitted their application for 501(c)(4) status in May of 2011. They received a letter from the IRS acknowledging their application. Nearly 4 months later they were told their application was "in the pile."

Over a year later, June of 2012, the West Suburban Patriots received a letter indicating that they had to answer a series of questions in an incredibly short timeframe. The questions were political, and demonstrated that the IRS scoured their Web site by demanding information that would be on their Members Only web page.

Isn't that interesting?

In July of 2012 they received a letter granting their 501(c)(4) status.

Now, the West Suburban Patriots name and tax ID number were found on a list of "political advocacy cases" that the Exempt Organizations Office in D.C. made to track Tea Party cases, and USA Today received the confidential political advocacy list and made it public.

Here is the point: this is not what the Internal Revenue Service should be doing. The Internal Revenue Service should be making proper inquiries, not asking about prayer meetings, not being passive aggressive, choosing winners and losers in the public square.

This is an important piece of legislation. It reclaims authority that was once delegated and has been abused, and now needs to be reclaimed.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

You know, I think with the IRS, we are, like, approaching a fork in the middle of the road and we have choices that we can make.

We now have new leadership. The agency has been sanitized. The individuals with culpability are no longer there. They no longer play in any leadership roles at all.

The new Commissioner has given us every assurance, and he comes to the IRS with an impeccable record from both public and private activity, and has given every assurance that can be given that he is going to take that road that leads to the highest level of integrity, that we can bank on the Internal Revenue Service being as fair as fair can be.

I like to believe that he means what he says, and that he says what he means. So I am confident that we have a new IRS, and we will see it function with a new light, a new spirit, and a new direction.

So I thank my colleague. I have no further requests for time.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank Mr. DAVIS for engaging in this debate and this discussion,

and I think he is right. We are at a fork in the road. I would describe the fork in the road as the responsibility that we have in the House.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge us to take this challenge, and that is to do everything that we can, in light of this information that has come to our attention, to make sure that the Internal Revenue Service is being limited, is not allowed to ask questions regarding religion or social questions or political questions, and that we can enjoy a day in the future when they enjoy our respect. With that, I urge passage the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2531.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 36 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. TERRY) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 1211, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 1123, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

FOIA OVERSIGHT AND IMPLEMENTATION ACT OF 2014

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1211) to amend section 552 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the Freedom of Information Act), to provide for greater public access to information, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.